



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/579,938	05/26/2000	Timothy J Williams	TJW-00100	8295

28960 7590 01/21/2004
HAVERSTOCK & OWENS LLP
162 NORTH WOLFE ROAD
SUNNYVALE, CA 94086

EXAMINER

SORKIN, DAVID L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

1723

DATE MAILED: 01/21/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 09/579,938	Applicant(s) WILLIAMS, TIMOTHY J	
	Examiner David L. Sorkin	Art Unit 1723	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 December 2003.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-7,9-11 and 13-33 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 20 and 27 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1,3-7,9-11,13-19,21-26 and 28-33 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

1. A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 22 September 2003 has been entered.

Failure to Comply with 37 CFR 1.121(c)

2. While the claims of the amendment filed 22 September 2003 are examined herein, applicant is notified that the amendment fails to comply with rule 121 (c) in that a complete list of all claims ever presented is not provided. Canceled claims 2, 8 and 12 are omitted from the list. Any reply to this office action should include a compliant listing of the claims.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

3. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

4. Claims 29-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. The claims contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor, at the time the application was filed, had

Art Unit: 1723

possession of the claimed invention. These new claims recite the new limitation "wherein the dispensing mechanism includes a diameter sufficient for paint to flow through". The originally filed specification does not discuss this issue at all. It is not stated that the dispensing mechanism has a "diameter" nor is the size of a passage, whether of a shape that has a diameter (such as a passage having a circular cross-section) or of a shape that does not have a diameter (such as a passage having a rectangular cross-section), discussed at all.

5. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

6. Claims 29-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Any relationship between a substance being "paint" and the size of a "diameter" is too vague to reasonably apprise one of ordinary skill in the art of the scope of the claimed diameter; especially consider that the specification gives no guidance whatsoever concerning what a sufficient diameter would be.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

7. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section

Art Unit: 1723

351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

8. Claims 1, 3, 4 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by DeVito (US 5,842,606). Regarding claim 1, DeVito ('606) discloses a container comprising a plurality of compartments (a plurality of 34) having a front, a back, a first side, a second side and a base; a frame (a plurality of 12 joined together as disclosed) holding the compartments; and means (52) for dispensing removably coupled to the base of the compartments, wherein the means for dispensing is capable of dispensing without lifting the compartments. While the claims include expressions concerning "paint", "[e]xpressions relating the apparatus to contents thereof during an intended operation are of no significance in determining the patentability of the apparatus claim". *Ex parte Thilbault*, 164 USPQ 666, 667 (Bd. App. 1969). Furthermore, "[i]nclusion of material or article worked upon by a structure being claimed does not impart patentability to the claims" *In re Otto*, 136 USPQ 458, 459 (CCPA 1963). See also *In re Schreiber*, 44 USPQ2d 1429, 1931 (Fed. Cir. 1997), where a claimed popcorn dispensing spout was held anticipated by a spout for dispensing oil from an oil can. The container of DeVito ('606) is intended to hold liquids (see col. 1, lines 6-8) and clearly would be capable of holding paint. Therefore, the claim is still anticipated even though the reference does not use the word "paint". Regarding claim 3, the means for dispensing paint includes a spigot assembly (see Fig. 5). Regarding claim 4, the frame includes mounting slots (38). Regarding claim 29, the means for dispensing includes a diameter sufficient for paint to flow through (see col. 1, line 40; col. 5, lines 37-67; Figs. 4 and 5).

9. Claims 1, 3, 4 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Briggs (US 6,109,482). Regarding claim 1, Briggs ('482) discloses an container comprising a plurality of compartments (see Fig. 5) having a front, back, first and second side and base; a frame (a plurality of 12 joined together as shown in Fig. 2) holding the compartments; and means (22) for dispensing removably coupled to the base of the compartments for dispensing from the compartments, wherein the means for dispensing is capable of dispensing without lifting the compartments. While the claims include expressions concerning "paint", "[e]xpressions relating the apparatus to contents thereof during an intended operation are of no significance in determining the patentability of the apparatus claim". *Ex parte Thilbault*, supra. Furthermore, "[i]nclusion of material or article worked upon by a structure being claimed does not impart patentability to the claims" *In re Otto* supra. See also *In re Schreiber*, supra., where a claimed popcorn dispensing spout was held anticipated by a spout for dispensing oil from an oil can. The container of Briggs ('482) is intended to hold liquids (see col. 1, lines 6-9) and clearly would be capable of holding paint. Therefore, the claim is still anticipated even though the reference does not use the word "paint". Regarding claim 3, the means for dispensing paint includes a spigot assembly (see Fig. 3). Regarding claim 4, the frame includes mounting slots (42). Regarding claim 29, the means for dispensing includes a diameter sufficient for paint to flow through (see col. 4 lines 14-18 where it is explained that a diameter is so large that it fits around the neck of a 2-liter soda bottle).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. Claims 1, 3-7, 9-11, 13-19, 22-26 and 29-33 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reed et al. (US 4,311,017). Regarding claim 1, Reed ('017) discloses a container comprising a plurality of compartments (24,27), each having a front, a back, a first side, a second side and a base (see Fig. 2, 3 and 5; col. 3, lines 15 and 16); a frame (2) holding the compartments; and means (15,16) for dispensing coupled to the base. While the claims include expressions concerning "paint", "[e]xpressions relating the apparatus to contents thereof during an intended operation are of no significance in determining the patentability of the apparatus claim". *Ex parte Thilbault*, supra. Furthermore, "[i]nclusion of material or article worked upon by a structure being claimed does not impart patentability to the claims" *In re Otto* supra. The container of Reed ('017) is intended to hold liquids (see col. 1, lines 6-9) and clearly would be capable of holding paint. Therefore, the claims are still unpatentable even though the reference does not use the word "paint". While it is not explicitly stated that the dispensing means is removable (although Fig. 3 appears to depict a hex nut), the reference recognizes advantages, of making parts removable (see col. 5, lines 35-37). Furthermore, it is has been held that making parts removable "would be obvious", *In re Dulberg*, 129 USPQ 349 (CCPA 1961). Regarding claim 3, the dispensing means is a

spigot assembly (see col. 5, lines 11-37). Regarding claim 4, the frame includes slots (101'). Regarding claim 5, one or more removable lids (25, 26 and/or 3) selectively cover the paint compartments, and means for stirring (111,112,113,114) are removably coupled to the lids. Regarding claim 6, the stirring means further comprises a circular base (111' or 114) a rod (112) coupled to the base, and a stirring fan apparatus (113) coupled to the rod. While it is not explicitly stated that the stirring fan apparatus is removable, the reference recognizes advantages, of making parts removable (see col. 5, lines 35-37). Furthermore, it is has been held that making parts removable "would be obvious", *In re Dulberg*, 129 USPQ 349 (CCPA 1961). Regarding claim 7, Reed ('017) discloses a container comprising a plurality of compartments (24,27), each having a front, a back, a planar first side and a planar second side and a base (see Fig. 2, 3 and 5; col. 3, lines 15 and 16); a frame (2) holding the compartments; lids (25,26 and/or 3); a stirring assembly (111,112,113,114) removably coupled to the lid(s); and a dispensing mechanism (15,16) coupled to the base. The dispensing mechanism is capable of dispensing without lifting the compartments. While the claims include expressions concerning "paint", "[e]xpressions relating the apparatus to contents thereof during an intended operation are of no significance in determining the patentability of the apparatus claim". *Ex parte Thilbault*, supra. Furthermore, "[i]nclusion of material or article worked upon by a structure being claimed does not impart patentability to the claims" *In re Otto* supra. The container of Reed ('017) is intended to hold liquids (see col. 1, lines 6-9) and clearly would be capable of holding paint. Therefore, the claim is still anticipated even though the reference does not use the word "paint". Regarding

claim 9, the frame includes slots (101'). Regarding claim 10, the stirring means further comprises a circular base (111' or 114) a rod (112) coupled to the base, and a stirring fan apparatus (113) coupled to the rod. While it is not explicitly stated that the stirring fan apparatus is removable, the reference recognizes advantages, of making parts removable (see col. 5, lines 35-37). Furthermore, it is has been held that making parts removable "would be obvious", *In re Dulberg*, 129 USPQ 349 (CCPA 1961). Regarding claim 11, Reed ('017) discloses a container comprising a plurality of compartments (24,27), each having a front, a back, a first side, a second side and a base (see Fig. 2, 3 and 5; col. 3, lines 15 and 16); a frame (2) holding the compartments; a dispensing mechanism (15,16), one or more removable lids (25, 26 and/or 3) covering the compartments; and a stirring assembly (111,112,113,114) removably coupled to the lids. While the claims include expressions concerning "paint", "[e]xpressions relating the apparatus to contents thereof during an intended operation are of no significance in determining the patentability of the apparatus claim". *Ex parte Thilbault*, supra. Furthermore, "[i]nclusion of material or article worked upon by a structure being claimed does not impart patentability to the claims" *In re Otto* supra. The container of Reed ('017) is intended to hold liquids (see col. 1, lines 6-9) and clearly would be capable of holding paint. Therefore, the claims are still unpatentable even though the reference does not use the word "paint". While it is not explicitly stated that the dispensing means is removable (although Fig. 3 appears to depict a hex nut), the reference recognizes advantages, of making parts removable (see col. 5, lines 35-37). Furthermore, it is has been held that making parts removable "would be obvious", *In re Dulberg*, 129 USPQ

Art Unit: 1723

349 (CCPA 1961). Regarding claim 13, the dispensing mechanism includes a spigot assembly (see col. 5, lines 11-37). Regarding claim 14, the frame includes slots (101'). Regarding claim 15, the stirring assembly further comprises a circular base (111' or 114) a rod (112) coupled to the base, and a stirring fan apparatus (113) coupled to the rod. While it is not explicitly stated that the stirring fan apparatus is removable, the reference recognizes advantages, of making parts removable (see col. 5, lines 35-37). Furthermore, it is has been held that making parts removable "would be obvious", *In re Dulberg*, 129 USPQ 349 (CCPA 1961). Regarding claim 16, Reed ('017) discloses a reusable container comprising a plurality of compartments (24,27) each having a first front, a first back, a first side, a second side and a base; body (2) holding the paint compartments having a second front, a second back, a planar third side and a planar fourth side (see Fig. 1); one or more removable lids (25, 26 and/or 3) coupled to the paint compartments having an outer side, an inner opposite side and an aperture located through the lid from the outer side to the inner opposite side; a stirring mechanism (111,112,113,114) removably coupled to the outer side of the lids having an integrally formed rod located at a central axis of the stirring mechanism, wherein the rod (112) is positioned through the aperture in the lids; a fan apparatus (113) coupled to the rod of the stirring mechanism on the inner opposite side of the lids; and a dispensing mechanism (15,16) coupled to the base. While the claims include expressions concerning "paint", "[e]xpressions relating the apparatus to contents thereof during an intended operation are of no significance in determining the patentability of the apparatus claim". *Ex parte Thilbault*, supra. Furthermore, "[i]nclusion of material or

article worked upon by a structure being claimed does not impart patentability to the claims" *In re Otto* supra. The container of Reed ('017) is intended to hold liquids (see col. 1, lines 6-9) and clearly would be capable of holding paint. Therefore, the claims are still unpatentable even though the reference does not use the word "paint". While it is not explicitly stated that the fan apparatus is removable, the reference recognizes advantages, of making parts removable (see col. 5, lines 35-37). Furthermore, it has been held that making parts removable "would be obvious", *In re Dulberg*, 129 USPQ 349 (CCPA 1961). Regarding claim 17, the body includes slots (101'). Regarding claim 18, the stirring mechanism includes a handle (see col. 6, lines 1 and 15-21). Regarding claim 19, the interior of the compartments has a sloped area and a reservoir area (see Figs. 2 and 3). Regarding claim 22, Reed ('017) discloses a reusable container comprising a body (2) having a first side and a second side and a plurality of compartments (24,27) each having a front, a back, a planar first side, a planar second side and a base; one or more removable lids (25, 26 and/or 3) coupled to the compartments having an outer side, an inner opposite side and an aperture located through the lid from the outer side to the inner opposite side; a stirring mechanism (111,112,113,114) removably coupled to the outer side of the lids having an integrally formed rod located at a central axis of the stirring mechanism, wherein the rod (112) is positioned through the aperture in the lids extending into a corresponding compartment; a fan apparatus (113) coupled to the rod of the stirring mechanism on the inner opposite side of the lids; and a dispensing mechanism (15,16) coupled to the base. While the claims include expressions concerning "paint", "[e]xpressions relating the apparatus to

contents thereof during an intended operation are of no significance in determining the patentability of the apparatus claim". *Ex parte Thilbault*, supra. Furthermore, "[i]nclusion of material or article worked upon by a structure being claimed does not impart patentability to the claims" *In re Otto* supra. The container of Reed ('017) is intended to hold liquids (see col. 1, lines 6-9) and clearly would be capable of holding paint. Therefore, the claims are still unpatentable even though the reference does not use the word "paint". While it is not explicitly stated that the fan apparatus is removable, the reference recognizes advantages, of making parts removable (see col. 5, lines 35-37). Furthermore, it is has been held that making parts removable "would be obvious", *In re Dulberg*, 129 USPQ 349 (CCPA 1961). See also *In re Larson*, 144 USPQ 347, 349 (CCPA 1965) regarding the obviousness of making part integral. Regarding claim 23, the paint compartments are single walled (see Fig. 5). Regarding claim 24, the body includes slots (101'). Regarding claim 25 the stirring mechanism includes a handle (see col. 6, lines 1 and 15-21). Regarding claim 26, the interior of the compartments has a sloped area and a reservoir area (see Figs. 2 and 3). Regarding claims 29-33, while it is not entirely clear whether the reference meets the limitation of these claims due to the indefinite nature of these claims discussed above, the dispensing mechanism is shown in Figs. 1 and 3 and described in col. 5, lines 11-37.

12. Claims 21 and 28 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Reed et al. (US 4,311,017) in view of Briggs (US 6,109,482). The apparatus of Reed ('017), discussed above regarding claims 16 and 22, fails to include rounded ribs and channels. Briggs ('482) discloses rounded ribs (44) and channels/grooves (42). It

is considered that it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to have provided the apparatus of Reed ('017) with ribs and channels/grooves as taught by Briggs ('482), because Briggs ('482) states that such ribs and grooves provided the benefit of allowing removable side-by-side coupling of a plurality of unit apparatuses (see col. 5. lines 13-32).

Allowable Subject Matter

13. Claims 20 and 27 are allowed.

Response to Arguments

14. Mullen et al. (US 5,673,817) is no longer relied upon, because it is the policy of the USPTO to avoid cumulative rejections.

15. Applicant's arguments, rather than addressing the claimed structure, are directed to "paint". None of the instant claims requires "paint". While the claims use terms such as "paint storage container", the storage container is not constructed of "paint", nor is the storage container claimed in combination with "paint". Instead, "paint" is simply the intended contents of the container, which the stirrer and dispensing mechanism are intended work upon. As applicant's representative explained in the 09 September 2003 interview, applicant desires claim coverage of the container even when it is empty and does not contain anything, such as paint. All the containers of the applied references are capable of holding liquids such as paint; therefor, the inclusion of the word "paint" in the claims does not render the claims patentable.

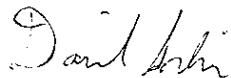
Application/Control Number: 09/579,938
Art Unit: 1723

Page 13

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David L. Sorkin whose telephone number is 571-272-1148. The examiner can normally be reached on 9:00 -5:30 Mon.-Fri..

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Wanda L. Walker can be reached on 571-272-1151. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0661.



David Sorkin